OPT

WORK AUTHORIZATION FOR F-1 VISA HOLDERS

WHAT IS OPT (Optional Practical Training)? - Temporary work authorization. The purpose of OPT is to gain training in your field of study for **up to 12 months**.

*(If you do any pre-completion OPT, you will not be eligible for the full 12 months of post-completion OPT).*

TYPES OF OPT:

**Pre-completion OPT:**

- You may participate in pre-completion OPT **during your studies** after you have been enrolled at CT State for one full academic year.
- You can only work part-time when school is in session.
- You may work part-time or full-time during school breaks.
- Part-time pre-completion OPT accrues at a rate of 50%. For example, 6 months of part-time pre-completion OPT is equal to 3 months of full-time OPT.
- All periods of pre-completion OPT are deducted from the post-completion OPT.

**Post-completion OPT:**

- You may participate in post-completion OPT **after** you have completed all degree requirements.
- You must have been enrolled at CT State full-time for at least one academic year.
- Job offer is not required.
- You may work part-time (at least 20 hours a week) or full-time.
- You must be present in the US when you apply for OPT.

**YOU ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR OPT IF YOU HAD:**

- Full-time CPT (Curricular Practical Training) for more than 364 days.
- Already been awarded OPT at the same or higher degree level.
SELECTING YOUR START DATE FOR POST-COMPLETION OPT

Know your I-20/Program End Date or Graduation Date (if different from Program End Date) because it determines the OPT application timeline.

- The earliest start date can be the day after the program end date.
- The latest start date can be 60 days after the program end date.

You can apply to USCIS no earlier than 90 days before you complete your degree, but no later than 60 days after you complete your degree. USCIS must receive your application within 30 days of your DSO’s recommendation in SEVIS.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS – 2 STEPS

Step 1 – Contact your DSO

- Submit your OPT Request Form.
- Go over Form I-765 and OPT Process/Requirements.

Step 2 – Apply to USCIS

- Your DSO will endorse your I-20 for OPT, give you an updated copy, and make suggestions for your Form I-765.
- Submit to USCIS your Form I-765 with supporting documentation, including the filing fee: $470 – online filing, $520 – paper filing.
- Processing time can be at least 90 days.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ONCE YOU HAVE APPLIED

FOR POST-COMPLETION OPT

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

YOUR POSITION MUST BE:

- In your field of study as listed on your I-20.
- You must work part-time (at least 20 hours per week) or full-time.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR POST-COMPLETION OPT

- Receive an EAD (send a copy to your DSO).
• Create a SEVP Portal account when you receive the link (check your SPAM folder).
• Report your employment on the SEVP Portal.
• Let your DSO know if you move, want to transfer to another school, or leave the US.

**TRAVEL ON OPT**

Only travel if:

• You are employed in your field of study **AND**
• Have a valid F-1 visa

If you travel, you must have the following documents:

• Valid passport (valid for 6 months after reentry)
• Valid visa
• I-20 with OPT recommendation and travel signature
• Valid EAD
• Employment verification letter

**60-DAY GRACE PERIOD**

When OPT ends, within **60 days**:

• Depart the US **before 60-day** grace period ends.
• Transfer to another academic program.
• Apply for a change of status or another visa type.

For questions, please contact your DSO.